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A N
E P I S T L E
FROM THE
Womens Quarterly Meeting
FOR THE
COUNTY OF YORK.

H. Friends, Society of



Women's Quarterly Meeting

COUNTY OF YORK.

ms. n. w.
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A N

E P I S T L E

FROM THE ²

Womens Quarterly Meeting

FOR THE

COUNTY OF YORK,

H E L D

At L E E D S,

The 26th and 27th of the 12th Month,
1781,

To the Monthly and Preparative
Meetings constituting the same.

L O N D O N:

PRINTED BY JAMES PHILLIPS,
GEORGE-YARD, LOMBARD-STREET.

M. DCC. LXXXII.

E P I S T L E

Womens Quarterly Meeting

COUNTY OF YORK



The sale and gain of the said Meeting

To the Monthly and Periodic
Meeting continuing the same

PRINTED BY JAMES THILLER

GEORGE-YARD, CORNHILL

M.DCCC.LXXII

A N
E P I S T L E

FROM THE
Womens Quarterly Meeting,

To the Monthly and Preparative Meetings
constituting the same.

DEAR FRIENDS,

WE are sensible that to us as a people no new thing can be said, having been favoured with a knowledge of the divine law, and the testimony required of us to bear; yet under a fresh renewed sense of Divine regard, we feel a fervent engagement to stir up the pure mind in you, that you may be animated with a lively concern, and that the stakes which remain in our Zion may be strengthened; that we may unitedly continue to hold forth an invitation to those who have not rightly entered the true sheep-fold, to look upon Zion the city of our solemnities, the continued refuge of the righteous, a quiet habitation, secure from the interruptions by

which an unwearied adversary is seeking to retard our progress, and dim our spiritual eyes, in presenting the glory, wisdom, profits, and friendships of this world, or drawing the mind into its various commotions, whereby it is prevented from seeing the truth in its own purity and simplicity.

Let us be engaged, beloved friends, frequently to look towards the Lord's holy habitation, and be willing to bear the searching power of truth, that we may experience not only the wine but the oil, which anoints and re-anoints for service; qualifying us to arise in the name of the Lord, and go forth in the way which he hath cast up for us.—Wherefore, we entreat you, dwell deep in your spirits, and carefully feel after renewed ability to step forward in the line of divine appointment; and when assembled in your meetings for worship and discipline, labour to have your minds separated from the entanglement of outward and even lawful things, that you may be favoured with the springing up of immortal life, and have your eyes afresh opened to see in
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what you have swerved from the pointings of duty, and wherein weakness hath entered: which hath sorrowfully been the case with some, even to the laying waste their testimony, who might have been as pillars in the Lord's house, if fully devoted to his will; but for want of their uprightness, there is cause to mourn, as when a standard-bearer fainteth.

Were our spirits thus exercised, individually labouring in our own vine-yards, he who is the great Husbandman would condescend more eminently to visit our assemblies, and himself to prune our branches; so that the fruits of holiness might be seen upon us.—Thus all who are rightly engaged in his service, would be enabled, in the meekness of wisdom, firmly to bear their testimony against the spirit and friendships of this world, in its corrupt language, customs and fashions, truly concerned that, in all things, their moderation may appear unto all men; even in the furniture of their houses, the provision of their tables, and the consistency of their families, walking uprightly before the Lord, as did Abraham, who commanded his household after

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him;

him; and being thus preserved under Divine limitations, and experiencing frequent necessary baptisms for more perfect refinement, they may arise as from the washing pool, and, in the authority of truth, bear that portion of rule which the Lord hath appointed them in his church, and among his people; warning the unruly, comforting the feeble-minded, and supporting the weak. A reformation thus advancing amongst the leaders of the people, the complaint of old may no longer be applicable to us, that the Lord hath given children for Nazarites and for prophets, but the parents (by early casting before them temptations to evil, or suffering the enemy to prevail, where their power might have prevented) have in effect given the Nazarites wine to drink, and said to the prophets, Prophecy not. Amos ii. 12. We wish these awfully to consider, that for every gift bestowed, whether spiritual or natural, inquisition will be made, that they might happily see the necessity of honouring the Lord with their substance, and the first fruits of all their increase, instead of gathering together, and chiefly appropriating it to nourish in their offspring

spring a departure from the simplicity of the truth, whereby the divine and gracious intention concerning them is often defeated.

As it is evident that the judgments of the Lord are in the earth, and that a part of the churches are visited therewith; and we having, as well as they, incurred the Divine displeasure, by the departure of many amongst us, from his holy commandments; let us now be engaged to humble ourselves before him, to have our eyes anointed to see, and our hearts dedicated to perform his will; that if the Most High should see meet to arise more eminently in judgment in this land, we may, by the operation of his spirit, experience every accursed thing done away, and, being purified and made clean, may repair to the fortress of his power, witnessing preservation as in the hollow of his hand, though subjected to outward calamities.

And you, beloved friends, whose situations and circumstances in life are so strait as to render it difficult to attend monthly, quarterly, and other religious meetings, without what may appear a great sacrifice of outward things; we believe of this class, there

there are many hidden servants in the Lord's house, who are walking humbly and mournfully before him ; with whom we affectionately sympathize, and whose habitations we visit, with the salutation of " peace be upon them." But, dear friends, let it be remembered, that the Lord is equal in all his ways ; and notwithstanding our circumstances may appear various, he deals bountifully with us all, and doth not leave any without ability to perform his will. Wherefore we wish to encourage and strengthen your minds to feel after, and prefer, that peace which is superior to all outward enjoyments, giving contentment with the allotment of Providence, and preserving from entanglements with things, for yourselves or your families, which the wisdom of truth never pointed out as necessary for us : whereby the Lord's people are prevented from advancing in the way of righteousness, and from attaining an holy confidence which would enable them to resemble the widow, who made the prophet a cake first, and whose meal and oil did not waste. Thus faithfully coming up in the attendance of our religious meetings, and being unitedly engaged for the advancement of the Lord's work in ourselves and in the earth, we may
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be enabled to offer together offerings in righteousness, of a sweet-smelling savour, such as will find acceptance as in days of old.

Our minds are impressed with a sense, that the gathering arm of Divine love is stretched out to many of the youth, and we entreat these to follow the footsteps of the flocks of the companions of Christ; and though many may want examples of this kind, and have cause frequently to query, "Who will shew us any good," yet remember the Lord's watchful eye is over you, and his power the same to manifest and lead into that uniform path the followers of Christ have ever walked in. We therefore intreat you to dwell under its humbling operation, whereby you would become acquainted, in the light of the Lord, with your own imperfections, and the proneness of your nature to evil; rather than justify yourselves by the departure of others from under the power of the cross of Christ. Thus will you find the reproofs of instruction are necessary for your salvation, and, by yielding thereto, power to overcome the temptations of the enemy will be afforded, and additional strength

strength succeed to press forward in the way of righteousness; whereby you may be brought like Moses, the appointed leader of Israel, in the time of youth, to prefer affliction with the people of God, rather than enjoy the pleasures of this world, which are but for a season.

But you who are the offspring of parents serviceable in any station in the church, we wish particularly to call your attention to the importance of your example: consider the favours bestowed upon you, the privileges many of you enjoy, for which you must assuredly be answerable; and, above all, consider that the testimony of truth is greatly weakened by the manifest deviation of some of you therefrom, and which it is your duty to support, by a conduct and appearance conformable thereto. We are sensible that the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment; and therefore we would impress on your minds, a sense of the need there is to purchase for yourselves the substance of truth, and to be subject to the humbling power thereof. Then will those desires be crucified which crave the forbidden fruit, and prevent your approaches to the tree of life, whereunto the

the redeemed only have access. Thus would you see it to be your indispensable duty to live under the government of the God of the faithful ; and though your growth and experience may not be equal to your being active for the truth, yet a tender concern would rest on your minds that you should do nothing against it, which we believe would be divinely regarded, and draw down a blessing upon you.

We are comforted under a sense, that amongst the youth there are a number whose minds have been as clay in the hand of the potter; and to those we need only say, Humbly and patiently abide there, that when the Lord is pleased to try, and carry forward his own work, by the renewed baptisms of the Holy Ghost and of fire, you may not start aside, neither count it strange as though some new thing had happened unto you; but rather remembering for your encouragement, that the Lord said unto his servant formerly, " I have refined thee, but not with silver: I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction."

We also feel an engagement for you beloved friends, who have come amongst us
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by convincement, and know what it is to purchase a possession in the truth, that nothing may divert your minds from a steady attention to the Divine leader, and cause you to take up any rest short of the true one, or to conclude, that after an admission into the society, and outward union with the Lord's people, you may be less careful and watchful over yourselves; but rather be engaged to follow on to know the Lord, and, by simple obedience to all his requirements, prove what is his perfect will concerning you; that so his gracious intention in bringing you amongst us may be answered. For want of this engagement how have divers halted in their progress, and gradually lost their habitation in the truth, until they have become like fruitless withered branches; some even returning to those things from which they were once redeemed. May all these awfully consider from whence they are fallen, and, by fully joining with the renewed offers of our heavenly Father's love, witness restoration to his favour, and to that station in the church which he may see meet to appoint. Notwithstanding we apprehend there is cause for these remarks, we are also sensible that there are others, who being thus joined

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ed to us, have manifested their love by their continued obedience, and are chosen of the Lord to feed his flocks, and to be diggers and pruners in his vineyard : these we salute, with such amongst us, who feel the weight of the work, and are baptized into deep suffering with the precious seed ; and to these we say, Let nothing abate your holy zeal, neither account your lives dear unto you, but be faithful unto death ; for in the victory of the Lamb of God, everlasting life will be the crown of his faithful followers.

Wherefore, dear friends, let us feel for renewed fellowship in that which is of the Father, whereby we may be enabled to strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, and to build one another up in the most holy faith ; that so our works may be found perfect before God.

Signed by order, and on behalf of the said meeting, held at Leeds the 26th and 27th of the 12th month, 1781.

By MARY BIRKBECK,

Clerk to the meeting this time.

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lasting life will be the crown of his faith.
And follow.

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up in the most holy faith: that to our works
may be joined perfect before God.

Designed by order, and on behalf of the
said meeting, held at Leeds the 25th and
26th of the 11th month, 1760.

BY MARY BIRKBECK

Clerk to the meeting this time.